O eternal and Almighty God, humbly we approach thy presence: in the Full knowledge of thine omnipotence: thou art the First cause among all causes: the creator of all life - all things that are, have their origin in thee - and to thee we humbly address our prayer. Hear us O Lord: hear the unspoken words of our hearts; enter our lives with thy Holy Spirit that we may enter into Full communion with thee.

O Gracious God, we give thee thanks for the many rich blessings thou hast bestowed upon us. We thank thee For this beautiful day, For the opportunity of gathering in thy house to worship thee.

We thank thee our Father, For thy church - and on this day we give special thanks For those who participate in its Ministry of teaching. We thank thee For all those who have given of themselves that others might learn of thee: For the Seminary professor, the Christian college profess For those who work in our denomination's Chr. Ed Board and Agencies. We thank thee O Lord For those in our own congregation who have dedicated themselves to thy ministry through teaching.

We ask thy continued blessing upon them, O Lord grant them wisdom that they might understand thy word grant them patience that they might rely upon thy presence in their classes as they perform their duties: grant them a due sense of the great responsibility that is theirs. We pray For all those, our Father, w are learners - regardless of age:- and, O Lord, we ask that thou wouldst awaken in each of us a questi and searching mind: - help us each to continue the task of learning with a diligent spirit.

All this we bring before thee, in the name of n whom we know as Teacher + Lord - even Jesus st: Amen

I have entitled my sermon today "Christian Education: Life Blood of the Faith" When we consider all that is involved that's quite a statement to make. It is to say that the very existence of Christianity depends on training and education; it's to say that without training--or with poor education Christianity will cease to exist; for an organism doesn't live long without its life blood.

Probably no other aspect of the life of the contemporary Christian Church has undergone such close scrutiny and radical change as the aspect of teaching. At present the sattus of Christian Education is in constant flux. Everyone has an opinion; ministers, professors, theologians, denominational excutives--all are concerned because of a common conviction that if there is a soft underbelly of the modern faith it is its practice of Education.

Anyone who is at all familiar with the structure of the United Presbyterian Church knows that Christian Education is taken as seriously as we know how. One of the five major Boards of our denomination, at the National level, is the Board of C. E. This Bd. organizes and employs curriculum writers, artists, theologians, field personnel and operates its own publishing house--Westminster Press. In the Synod of Indiana three full-time field personnel are retained to supervise C. Ed. within the Synod. The C. E. Commt. of Presbytery is one of the most crucial; a inevitably takes the longest amount of time to give ts report at meetings of the Presbytery. In the local Church C. Ed. is the sole responsiblity of the Session and is to be given top priority. The changing significance of the field is illustrated by the fact that churches large enough to warrant the hiring of a second full time staff member, more and moe are ignoring the asst. pator emphasis and hiring a full time DCE; a person who is a specialist in the field and who usually owns the graduate MA.

In our church the leadership of the C.E. program has traditionally fallen on the Church School Supt. Very recently we have formed a Session Comt. of Ch. Ed., chaired by an elder, with the thought that we want it known that responsibility for this job is not soely the superintendents, or the teachers but the congregations.

We employ, and did employ even before the changeover, the UPC school curriculum. It's title is significant--Christian F ith and Life; a program for church and Home. But before we think abut it I want to call your attention to samples of the curriculum we have placed on the table for your personal and inspection.

We feel that the Christian Faith & LIfe curriculum is the best offered by any denomination. It is a total program; that is it begins with our smallest youngsters, under three years of age and continues to th adult level. It realizes, as many curricula, do not, that levels of comprehension vary greatly among children of different ages. It realizes that you cannot explain the curcifixion of J.C., in the same trmms to Jr. Hi's and first graders. It goes further; it assumes that threre are some aspects of the Faith that are uncomprehnsible to small chidren. Again the crucifixion is a good ~~illustration~~ example. A few day s ago I joined my children in the tv room; ~~when~~ where they were watching a story abut sheep. There was a famine and graphic pictues of starving, dying sheep flashed on the screen. Needless to say this upset my daughter to no end; and the rest of the evening I found myself the target of an infinite amount question; (Why did the lambs die daddy? Why were they hungry? How d they die? -and so on.) Now perhaps some will disagree--but I don't think my daughter is capable of comprehending the mystery of death, I dont make a point of avoiding the subject; I answer her questins as frankly as know how by drawing analogies she can understand. Speaking out of purely personal opinion--I don't want my daughter tobe told that Jeus died--

like ~~that~~ those sheep. I don't want her told, quite yet, that she is saved by his blood; and that furthere more he wasn't dead very long, but rose from the grave.

And so the curriculum deals with concepts the very young can handle They know what love is; they've had first-hand experience with love since they were born. They are cultivating an every increasing knowledgeof the world; trees, grass, sand, clouds blankets, shoes. The curriclum therefore, uses what the chidl knows; and ties love to God, and the things the child can touch and feel and see to Gods love. My daughter doesn't know about the incarnation, or attonement--but she knows that he loves her, and that at meal time we tell him thank you for what he has given us. God made the tree

The curriculum tools are here for you to see and I hope you will take time after the service to look them over.

As most of you know i'm a dissatisfied young man; and one of the areas in the church about which I am least satisfied is C.Ed. In fact, at times, I am inclined to agree with Rev. Hugo Leinberger an official of the UCC, when he said the greatest enemy of the contemporary Christian Faith is not Communism, or Seclarism, or Nationalism, or Athesism but the Sunday School. I've already warned the teacher of the adult class that I was going to say that--and I know she will listen to the reaminder of what have to say. I hope the rest of you will indulge in some careful thought too; for all of us have fond memories of SS. We all can remember pleasant experiences--in fact the SS, like ice cream cones and the NY Yankees, is firmly bedded in Americana; and to oppose it is to be practically ~~xxxxxxxx~~ subversive.

In the 6th chapt. of Deut. we hear: "And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your ouse, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up."

Herein is the secret of the existence of Jdaism; ("you shall teach them diligently to your children.") Hundreds of religons have been born and have flourished and have slowly died away. But the faith of Israel, beginning at the dwwn of recorded history and extedding across 3½ thousand years, into the present, has continued to retain its / virility. Judaism has faced and been conquered by Egyptians, Assyraians, Babylonians, Persians, Romans, and Germans and still it lives. The answer is found in two places; in the psychology of personality developme and in this small verse--and it is the same answer. Personality pshcho. informs us that the most powerful force in an emerging person--is the fami Imprinted indelibely in a young mind are habits, ideas, likes, dislikes, prejudices and beliefs of a family. This modern truth has been knowsn and used for centureies by Jddaism; its best illustration is the Jewish family at worship, perforing ancient acts of liturgy around the family table--with the father--as teacer and priest.

The American Sunday School, on the other hand, has created a mentali that denies this profound truth.
The Sunday School came about as a necessity: it filled a serious need in frontier communities where public education was not yet established: it was born in an era that saw religion pushed out of public education. The history of the American S.S. Movement is fascinating to read. Shortly after its inception it began to move away from the mainstream of the churc Sunday schols banded together in Unions: and became the sole means of religious expression for both young and old. S.S. Leaders stood in defianc of the church: and at times even refused even to allow clergymen to have anything to do with the operation of the schools. Time is forcing me to generalize: but it can be said that the independent S.S. movement built up around it a S.S. mentality: A mentality that wrenched Christian Education away from the church: and worse yet away from the family. At present we live in the backwash of that unfortubate movement: S.S. is stil for womenr and children: for many S.S. is a substitute for the church: and

most serious of all - sending the kids off tv on Sunday morning has replaced any serious atempt to come to grips with Chritinity as a living faith that has its beginning in the root of civilization- in the family.

The united Presbyterian Church is trying to drastically reform a whole mentality. We begin by calling our curriculum a program for church and home. And yet the battle must be fought against impossible odds. The lesson books here displayed are written for parents and teachers: the whole program depend on parents spending time with their children going over the home material. But our experience has been that when we buy the material and deliver it to the door and explain how it is to be used it still ends up in the waste basket. Not long ago one of our teachers asked a little girl if her mother read the paper that is senf home every other week. The telling reply was: "No, she just throws it ~~in the waste basket~~ away." We have had such an absolute lack of even minimal concern that we stopped sending the lesson books home, rather than waste your money.

Our record in adult education is not much better. Our recent discussion group brought out six people: and at the final session there were two. Now I'm grateful for the opportunity to talk with one person about Christianity: I'm grateful to those six for giving their time: my ego is not damaged when programs fail; But I wonder -if out of 116 people, only six wish to learn more about their faith.?

I firmly believe that until we put Christian Education back where it belongs - in the family: untill we allow our teachers the minimum luxury of knowing they are working with and not against parents: until we rid ourselves of the absurd notion that Christian Education is for the young and stops at 18: until we, the congregation of this church, come to grips with the truth that Chrsitian Education is the task of every Christiab and the very life blood of the church: we might as well take this table full of materials out and burn it: or more sensibly and economically not buy it in the first place

The problem within the church is matched by an even greater one int the cultu
We know that Christianity is best taught and passed along within the family.
And at ther same time we have to acknowledge the vast and rapid change of s
the family has undergone in the past 100 years.

James Smart, a leading Christian Educator, has said that the traditional functions of the American family have been peeled away, one by one, like layers from an onion. The home has become a hotel-like establishment - a sleeping place for its separate inhabitants. The family leaves in the morning, each going his separate way, eats the evening meal together, again disperses in different directions and returns only to retire for the night. At very best it sits down together before the television set: which is essentially no differnt from spending the evening in a movie theater. This is not to call the situation good or bad: it is just a statement of fact.- A fact of contemporary life that we must consider. We can't expect families to be something modern life makes it impossible for them to be. We have to work with what we are given. And so we must try to recreate certain aspects of family life that elude us. To be a family today takes an effort: it no longer is part and parcel of the American way of life. And to do an effective job of Christian nuture takes alot of effort.

What responsibility do parents have for the Christian nuture of their Children? to what degree are parents responsible for the ultimate spiritual stance of their offspring? A passage from Cleridge points the way: (read the passage.)

Soemwhere along the line we have been victimized by the notion that children should discover and choose their own religion: that we should not enforce our beliefs upon them. In certain circles this is a sign of true liberality and up-to-datedness. What it really is, however, is a parent tacitly admitting "Christianity isn't all that important to me: certaimly not important enought to see that my children become Christians. But it is a rare father who does not see that his child believes in Democrarcy

and not Communism: it is a rare parent who relegates brushing teeth to the child's discretion: it is a rare parent who allows his child freedom of choice when the school bus pulls up to the corner: in fact, it is a rare parent who dosen't foist his politics, tatse in food, cars, and whole style of life on his children: and yet I have found it to be a rare parent who feels at all responsible for his child's religious nuture: Interested? Yes: but the responsibility for getting it done? — that belongs to someone else.

Today is Christian Education Sunday: but Christian Education is a day by day task. It happens here in the church, only when it is an ongoing process in the home. Let us not fall victim to the assumtion that the S.S. teacher can do the job alone: that when we promised to bring our children up in the nuture and admonition of the Lord, or as a Congregtion promised to be "this child's sponsor to the end that he might confess Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior" that menat leaving the job to a teacher, one hour a week. Let us not fall victim to the assumtion that Christian Education is for the young and doesn't concernus us after we have reached the age of adulthood.

Let us see Christian Education as the very Life Blood of the Christian Faith: Let is join hands and teach our children - and teach each other.